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CASUALTY

A PERSONAL JOURNAL ZINE ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH BROADCAST TELEVISION OVER THE YEARS

THIS ISSUE IS ALL ABOUT TELEVISION SHOWS. (MISSION STATEMENT).

So in the last issue I did a little section all about Sabrina the Teenage Witch and it got me to thinking: why not devote an entire zine to tv shows that I like? Well here we are, like it or not. I'll try to make it as painless and enjoyable as possible and I promise it won't feel like an assignment. I'm sorta making this stream-of-consiousness style as I'm making it so I don't know how it will come out so I apologize in advance if it doesn't work out.

I remember as a kid really getting into shows like Gilligan's Island, The Munsters, and Twilight Zone because they came on Fox 17 (I think) and I could pick that channel up like gangbusters in my room on this old black and white tv I had. So imagine my mind being blown years later when I discovered that most of Gilligan's Island was actually in color!

SO HERE ARE SOME RANDOM BULLET POINTS ABOUT THOSE OLD SHOWS

1: THE MUNSTERS WAS REALLY FUNNY, AND STILL MAKES ME LAUGH TO THIS DAY.

2: SAME APPLIES TO GILLIGAN'S ISLAND. WE ARE DEALING WITH SOME FUNNY SHIT HERE.

3: A LOT OF THESE CLASSIC SHOWS WERE ALSO ON NICK AT NITE, WHICH WAS THE BEST THING THAT CABLE TV EVER HAD TO OFFER. I WATCHED A LOT OF MR. ED ON NICK AT NITE.

4: MR. ED IS A REALLY STRANGE SHOW WHEN YOU WATCH IT NOW, AND I TRULY HOPE THAT THEY TREATED THAT HORSE WITH THE UTMOST CARE. THEY DID..... RIGHT??

5: OH SNAP LET ME GET INTO THE MONKEES AND THE BRADY BUNCH!!

the monkees: yes, it's true that most kids who watched old reruns to the monkees grew up thinking that all bands lived together and spent most of their time going on hijink adventures...or getting into impossible situations. that show drilled that idea into all of our heads, and to be honest - when I hear that band members choose **NOT** to get chased around by a man in a gorilla suit, help capture foreign spies, or cruise around town in a band-branded hot rod WELL I THINK THAT'S JUST DARN WEIRD now isn't it.

the brady bunch: i think it's safe to say that I've seen every episode of the brady bunch at least five times. I also have this memory from when I was a kid of how I thought they were a real family....ya know, like in real life. I also had a crush on Jan. I thought she was dangerous..and cool.

YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN ME DO FASHION SECTIONS IN PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THIS ZINE WHERE I HIGHLIGHT CERTAIN THINGS THAT THE BRADYS OR THE MONKEES HAVE WORN. I WILL COME CLEAN AND SAY THAT I WAS NEVER PERSONALLY INFLUENCED STYLE-WISE BY ANY OF THEM, ALTHOUGH I DID WEAR A TOBOGGAN SIMILAR TO MIKE NESMITH'S QUITE A BIT DURING MY GRUNGE PHASE.

whoa hang on a second, back to MR. ED. i totally forgot about this till now. so early on in the series, the main character WILBUR asks Mr. Ed how it is that he can TALK. Mr. Ed replies to not worry about it and that it's "bigger than both of us". This has led many to wonder if that show was actually either a **supernatural** show, or perhaps it was that Mr. Ed was a representation of Wilbur's **mental health** because as we all (should) know NO ONE took mental health seriously back then. the final episode SHOULD have addressed that..instead it had Mr. Ed going off to college to become a **veterinarian.**

LET'S TAKE A BREAK AND GET ON TO THE INTERVIEW - I'M SO EXCITED ABOUT IT

interview

susie lewis

Susie Lewis is a television writer and producer, and is best known for co-creating the iconic MTV series **Daria**. Back in the 90s, she worked on several **MTV** animation shows including **Beavis and Butt-head, Aeon Flux, The Maxx, and The Head**. She later won an Emmy for her work on the hit show **Sea Rescue**. Most important of all, she's a really awesome person and I can't thank her enough for answering my questions!

SO HERE WE GO!

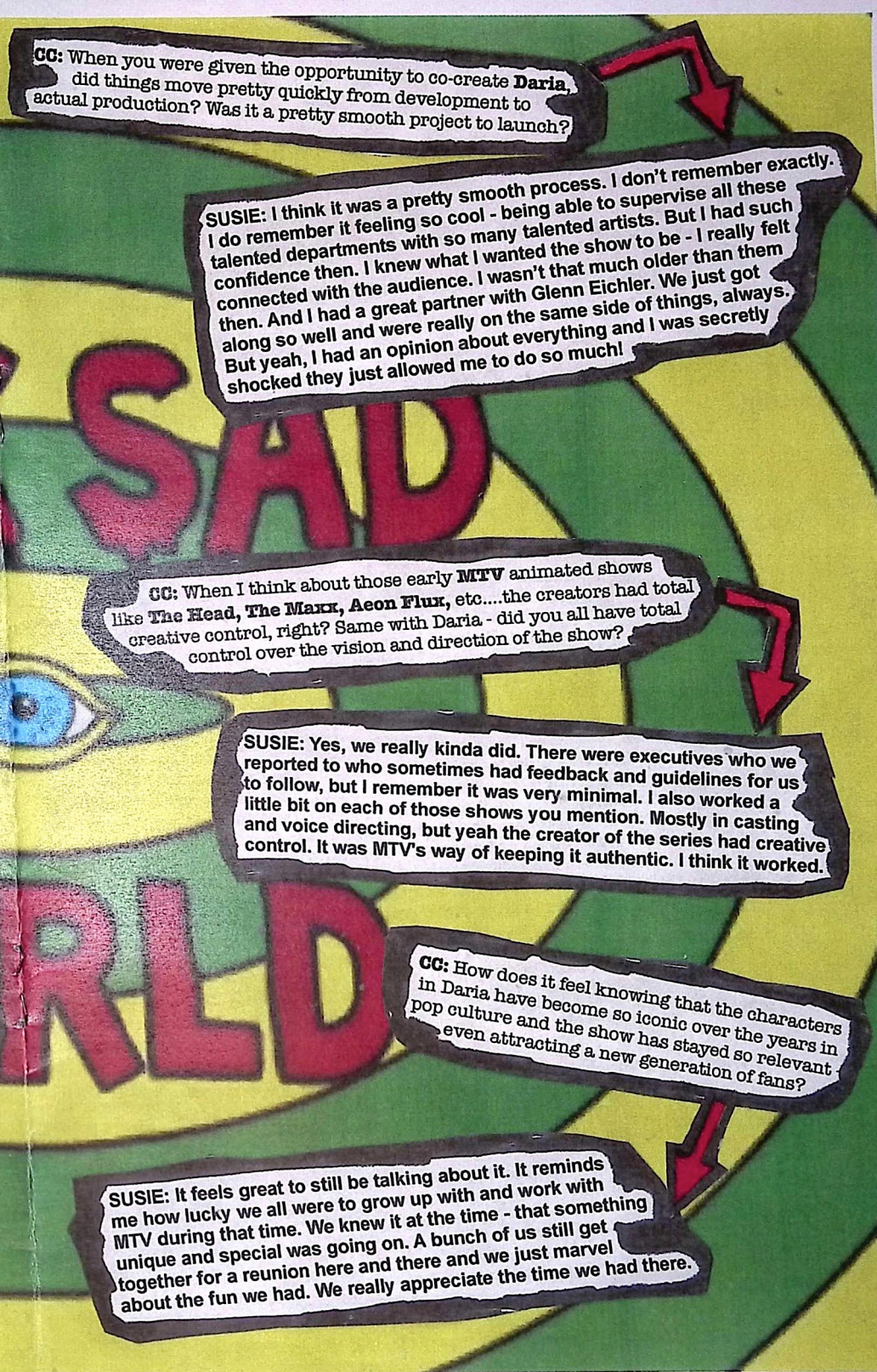
CC: What were some of your favorite tv shows while growing up? Were there any shows that you always watched together with your family, or perhaps with your friends?

SICK

SUSIE: We did a lot of family watching then since there was only 1 or 2 TVs in the house at that time. But some of my favorites included THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN, THE BIONIC WOMAN and CHARLIE'S ANGELS. When I got a little older, I loved ROSEANNE and CHEERS. And always SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE. We really watched so much TV. But there isn't anything that I really remember as groundbreaking for myself. That changed when MTV came into the picture. It was the most exciting thing at the time because it combined my 2 favorite things in life - music and television! My world changed. I suddenly loved everything British. I was exposed to so many different artists. I loved it all.

CC: I read that you produced the music video segments on **Beavis and Butt-head**. When selecting videos for them to riff on, did you ever see it as a chance to expose a large audience to some of your favorite artists? Like a lot of people, those segments were my favorite part of the show, and it's also how I learned about some really cool music!

SUSIE: Yes and thank you! That job was really one of the best I had (second only to DARIA.) Like you said, I started out just picking my favorite bands. So many of those videos never got any airtime (maybe on 120 MINUTES) so I was really excited to get them on the air. It's kind of amazing I got to pick all those videos. Usually they had the programming department program all the videos on shows, but somehow they missed BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD. By the time they realized someone else was selecting/programming videos, the show was really doing well and they didn't want to mess with any secret formula so they just told me to keep doing what I was doing. That's one classic example of why everyone talks about how great those years at MTV were - they let us do so much on our own.


CC: When you were given the opportunity to co-create Daria, did things move pretty quickly from development to actual production? Was it a pretty smooth project to launch?
SUSIE: I think it was a pretty smooth process. I don't remember exactly. I do remember it feeling so cool - being able to supervise all these talented departments with so many talented artists. But I had such confidence then. I knew what I wanted the show to be - I really felt connected with the audience. I wasn't that much older than them then. And I had a great partner with Glenn Eichler. We just got along so well and were really on the same side of things, always. But yeah, I had an opinion about everything and I was secretly shocked they just allowed me to do so much!
SAD
CC: When I think about those early MTV animated shows like The Head, The Maxx, Aeon Flux, etc....the creators had total creative control, right? Same with Daria - did you all have total control over the vision and direction of the show?
SUSIE: Yes, we really kinda did. There were executives who we reported to who sometimes had feedback and guidelines for us to follow, but I remember it was very minimal. I also worked a little bit on each of those shows you mention. Mostly in casting and voice directing, but yeah the creator of the series had creative control. It was MTV's way of keeping it authentic. I think it worked.
RLD
CC: How does it feel knowing that the characters in Daria have become so iconic over the years in pop culture and the show has stayed so relevant even attracting a new generation of fans?
SUSIE: It feels great to still be talking about it. It reminds me how lucky we all were to grow up with and work with MTV during that time. We knew it at the time - that something unique and special was going on. A bunch of us still get together for a reunion here and there and we just marvel about the fun we had. We really appreciate the time we had there.

interview continued:

CC: ....and a quick bonus question: Working at **MTV** in the 90s seems like an absolute dream job. I gotta ask - while working there, did you ever run into anyone famous randomly that just blew your mind? Like, in my mind's eye I'm picturing **Madonna**, **Prince**, or **The Spice Girls** dropping by just to hang out. Maybe I'm totally wrong about that? Haha

SUSIE: It was a dream job! And there were always rockstars parading around the office. And there would be performances in the lobby and I don't even remember how we'd find out about them. But if you happened to be going to a certain floor to distribute a memo or have a meeting and someone was playing in the lobby, it was absolutely acceptable to stop and watch and listen for as long as you wanted. I don't remember seeing those you mention there but I'm sure they were all there at some point. And I am sure I know someone who has a great story to tell about each of one them.

once again, thanks to susie for doing the Q&A! and hey, if for some reason you've never checked out shows like Daria or any of the early MTV animation shows, please do yourself a favor and get RIGHT ON THAT!

.....and now back to our regularly scheduled programming.....

let's move forward a little bit, but don't worry....this isn't necessarily gonna be a chronological sort of thing.

My favorite cast member of **star trek the next generation** was without a doubt **DATA** (yeah i know big surprise there). I was part of a group of group of STAR TREK fans in early high school and we all watched it EVERY NIGHT because it was damn well on TV every night. We'd sit at the same table during lunch and break down the previous night's episode. As you might imagine, we were absolutely HUGE with the ladies. After I had seen every episode, I'd watch them with the volume down play CDs while turning the closed captioning on because I got upgraded to a better COLOR tv around that time. I found myself really liking playing the band **LUSH** as well as **COCTEAU TWINS** while watching star trek. So now when I hear those bands I sorta feel like i'm on the **starship enterprise.**

HERE ARE SOME OF MY FAVE PICS OF DATA FROM STAR TREK - AS WELL AS SOME RANDOM MONKEES AND BRADYS THROWN IN FOR GOOD MEASURE. ENJOY

I ONCE SLIPPED INTO A DIMENSION THAT REALIZED MY GENIUS.

one of the coolest things that ever happened to me with a television program involves the series FRINGE that started airing in 2008 and lasted five or so seasons. i was wayyyyyy into it because it was all about alternate dimensions, paranormal topics, fringe science, and just all around crazy stuff. sorta like XFILES, but then again its own unique thing. it had a pretty active online community and i was active in said community. FRINGE had a ton of imagery and lots of "easter eggs" in each episode, so i started making really short fan videos that in-corporated a lot of the imagery and themes found in the show. they got a little popular, especially one in particular that featured my jukebox. see, there was a fictional 1960s band that was the subject of a couple of episodes, so i made it look like my jukebox had one of their old 7" records in it. people flipped over the video. then, many episodes later the show itself made a reference to it. THAT BLEW MY MIND! it was the coolest thing ever. i don't remember exactly what was said, but it was obvious they were referencing my jukebox video. people on the fan forums agreed. FRINGE rules.

THE SONG MOST DEFINITELY DOES NOT REMAIN THE SAME

one thing i can't stand is how older shows had to remove all the original music from all the episodes and replace it with generic songs. i mean I GET IT, it's all about money and licensing and blah blah blah but damn. the biggest examples of this are **daria** - which used all kinds of current MTV buzz bin songs as transitional music, and **felicity** - which did the same thing....but more. felicity would incorporate songs into the mood of what was going on and was **super** effective in it. now, when you watch it, it's been replaced by just some rando song. i mean, i wanna hear **sarah mclachlan** when felicity and noel are making out. so sometimes i'll just play it on my phone during those scenes and try and drown the elevator music out. it kinda works.

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL WAS FREAKIN WEIRD BACK IN THE DAY

there was a time where i could survive on watching the SCI-FI channel, the CARTOON NETWORK, and G4 - a channel devoted to video games and computer news (yep, it existed!) BUT by far my fave was indeed the SCI-FI channel (now called SYFY), and it was a trip. that channel had some of the most insane original shows of all time, it's almost as if they had a running contest on who could develop and produce the most batshit crazy shows AND get them put on the air. one in particular remains one of my fave shows of all time....LEXX. there is NO WAY that show would make it on the air today. i don't even think it would get green lit to be on a streaming network. well, i've talked it up so lemme give you the idea of it: it was basically this SUPER hard sci-fi show that centered around a ship that was actually a living organism that looked like a giant bug, and was manned by a small crew that involved an ex-con goofy pilot named stanley, a love slave named zev, and a resurrected assassin named kai. HIJINKS ENSUE. but yeah it's a weird show, and some episodes play out almost like a bad fever dream so it's fun to watch when you are super sick and a little out of your mind. other shows that i watched from time to time on SCI-FI include FARSCAPE, which featured JIM HENSON designed creatures and CLEOPATRA 2525 which officially out-crazied LEXX in every way possible. OH and MST3K was on the SCI-FI channel as well for it's final three seasons and i still have a ton of old vhs recordings of a bunch of those episodes if you wanna borrow them.

DON'T GO SLEEPING WITH THE PAST, DON'T GO WAKING WITH A DREAM.

I have, over the past few years, gotten into TV shows that aired during my teenage years...but didn't watch at the time. These shows are mostly the teen / high school drama types, like **Beverly Hills 90210** and **Party of Five**. I find them super comforting to watch - mainly because it reminds of the days before....well, basically everything that exists now. Make sense? GOOD. 90201 is legit a great show, although some pretty ridiculous things happen in it. **Kelly** getting caught on fire at a party is one. The aftermath of that was insane! Party of Five is good and remember when I said it was comforting? Well, it IS....BUT. It's also sorta stressful because I swear only bad things happen to that family. And **Bailey** makes some of the worst life decisions in TV history. Actually they all do except **Claudia**. WAIT I TAKE THAT BACK, her giving up the violin was pretty dumb. She was a genius. Who knows, she might get back into it in season 3. I'm not quite there yet. PLEASE don't spoil it for me if you know because I have money riding on it.

STAYING UP FOR LATE NIGHT APPOINTMENT TELEVISION

A few issues ago I interviewed **David Martel**, who played Teddy on **The Adventures of Pete and Pete**. He brought up something that I think about often: appointment television. It refers to a time when you HAD to catch the show when it aired....or it may be lost forever, or at least until reruns start. And as much as that sucked - I totally miss it. I also really liked the idea of watching a show at the same time as everyone else across the country - so even if you were watching it alone, you still felt like you were part of something. One of my biggest "appointment TV" shows was **My So Called Life** - I would've walked barefoot through a glass shattered and crocodile infested parking lot to make it home in time to catch that one. Late night TV was also big to me as well. I LOVED **Johnny Carson** as a kid, and if I didn't at least watch the opening monologue the night would feel incomplete. Same with **David Letterman** and later **Conan O'Brien**. **USA Up All Night** showed awesome midnight and b-movies and was hosted by the likes of **Rhonda Shear** and **Gilbert Gottfried**.. I LOVED IT. There used to be this show on Friday nights called **Friday Night Videos** and that was must-see TV for me since I didn't have MTV and **loved** music videos. The station **TBS** had this show called **Night Flight** that opened my mind to the world of counter culture, as well as **Night Tracks** which showed some crazy cool videos. I have a great memory of seeing the video for Eternal Flame by The Bangles while watching Night Tracks, and thinking it was the most sincere thing my 12 year old brain had ever seen. At that point it probably was. Damn it might still be...!